

CIA-RDP79T00975A03010

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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE DAILY CABLE

Saturday May 21, 1977

CG NIDC 77-118C

DIA review(s) completed.

NATIONAL SECURITY INFORMATION

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National Intelligence Daily Cable for Saturday, May 21, 1977.

The NID Cable is for the purpose of informing senior US officials.

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USSR: Meeting

[redacted] Pravda announced yesterday that the USSR Supreme Soviet will meet on June 16; such a meeting is often preceded by a plenum of the party Central Committee. No changes were made in

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the Politburo at the last plenum in October, and there appeared to be a general reluctance to make changes in the top leadership at that time. Some personnel shifts now seem overdue, and could be made at a June plenum.

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[] One possible change would be the removal of Politburo member and Defense Minister Ustinov from the party Secretariat, since it is not customary to hold full-time party and government posts at the same time. Konstantin Katushev could be dropped from the Secretariat for the same reason; he was recently appointed a deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers.

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[] There are conflicting reports as to whether Katushev will be dropped from the Secretariat. If Katushev loses his post as party secretary, his place could be taken by the present chief of the Central Committee's Bloc Department, K. V. Rusakov.

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[] The meetings next month could offer some clues as to whether the Kremlin's senior officials are actually laying plans for an orderly succession. They have never been able to come to grips with this problem, but the health problems of several of the senior leaders could provide the impetus for major change.

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ZAIRE: Situation Report

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[] According to press reports, the Zairian troops that entered Kisenge yesterday have advanced to within some 40 kilometers of Dilolo, the border town occupied by the Katangans when the invasion began more than two months ago. If the Katangans continue to put up little or no resistance, government forces could be in Dilolo within a few days.

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[redacted] To the north, Zairian troops were reported at mid-week to be less than 50 kilometers from Sandoa. [redacted]

[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted] Zairian military sources apparently were concerned earlier this week that the Katangans might still be considering a counterattack, but this now appears unlikely. The Katangans apparently offered little or no resistance when Zairian forces entered Kisenge, which was thought to be one of their logistic bases.

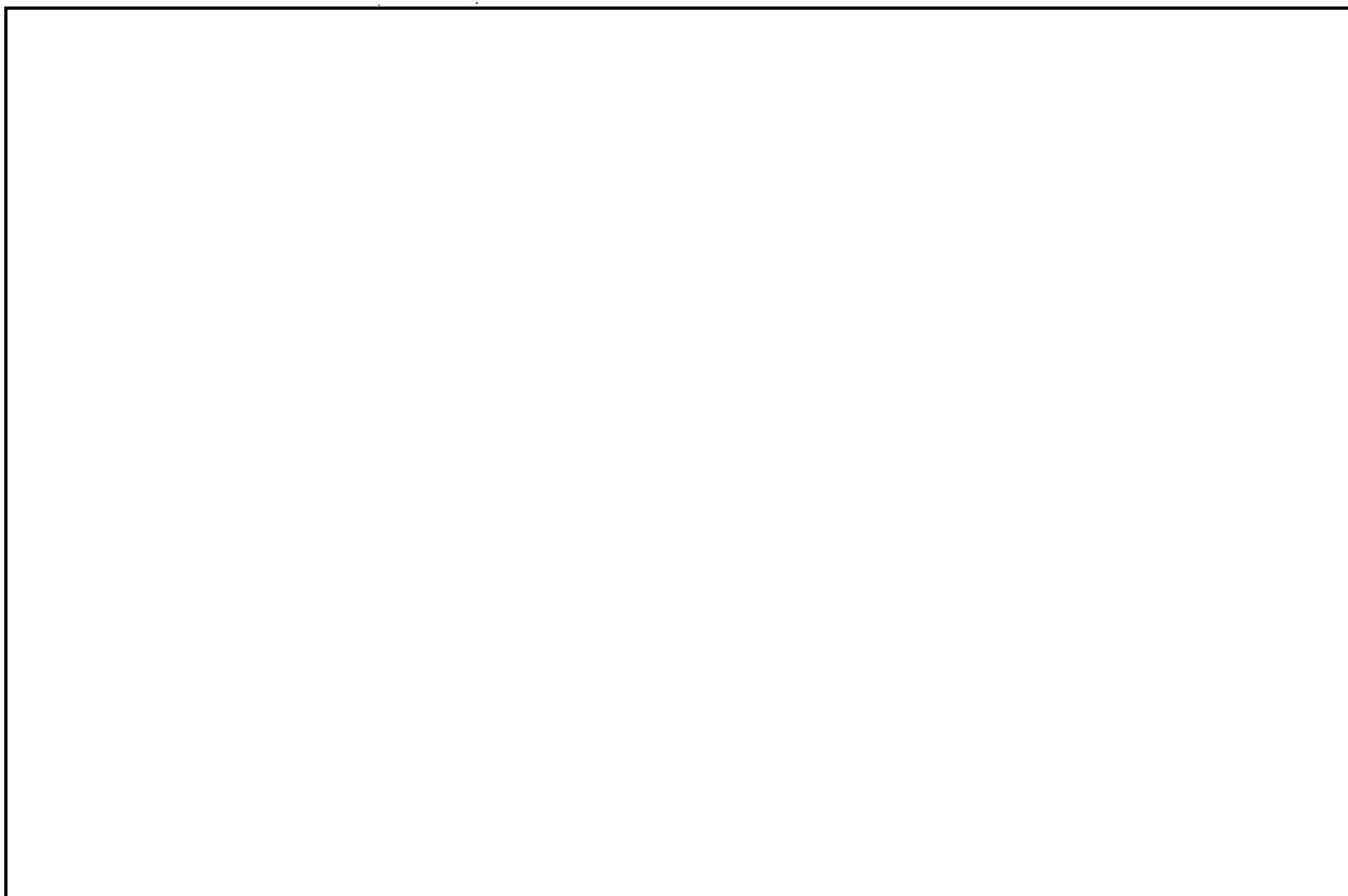
[redacted] The recent successes in Shaba apparently have prompted the Zairian government to decide not to use the Egyptian pilots, technicians, and medical personnel who were sent to Zaire more than two weeks ago. The US defense attache in Kinshasa reports that the Egyptians, many of whom never even reached the south, are unhappy about the situation.

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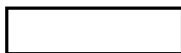
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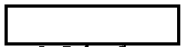


YUGOSLAVIA: Amnesty

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 *The long-promised amnesty for Yugoslav political prisoners evidently is in trouble because of differences within the regime over how sweeping it should be.*

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 Until recently, top Yugoslav leaders had been saying publicly that an amnesty would be forthcoming. Stane Dolanc, President Tito's number two in the party, has now flatly told a British journalist that there would be no amnesty. This may not, however, be the last word. A lawyer for several prominent political prisoners said a few days ago that, although the details are still unclear, the amnesty may occur after the preparatory meeting for the European security conference opens in Belgrade next month.

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[] Hard-line politicians reportedly have tried to block any show of leniency for liberals and nationalists who have been jailed in recent years. Clemency for pro-Soviet "Cominformists" also poses problems for leaders like Dolanc who have taken adamant public stands on the threat that the pro-Soviets pose to Yugoslav independence.

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[] The Tito regime may also be angered over what it regards as foreign pressures for a substantial amnesty. Western journalists have been pressing leaders at every opportunity for word on the amnesty. Tito may have held up the amnesty decree rather than appear to be yielding to pressures from abroad.

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[] There is still a chance that an amnesty for nonpolitical offenders will be announced next Wednesday in conjunction with Tito's 85th birthday. Several republics have already cleared the way for such a limited action. []

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SPAIN: Political Violence

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[] Political violence--particularly in the Basque country--stemming from pro-amnesty demonstrations for political prisoners a week ago has injected an unsettling factor into pre-election politics. Basque protests have provoked rightist retaliation that could result in another round of violence. Prime Minister Suarez is trying to speed up an amnesty review, and the major political parties and trade unions are appealing to the public to avoid additional violence that could undermine the parliamentary election.

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[] Anger in the Basque provinces over police brutality during the pro-amnesty demonstrations, which resulted in five deaths and over 100 injured, led to a general strike on Monday. Subsequent calls by the major political parties and trade unions to avoid further violence resulted in an uneasy calm. Nevertheless, radical Basque groups have threatened another general strike for May 23 unless the remaining 27 Basque political prisoners are freed.

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[] The calm was broken by the murder of a policeman on Wednesday in San Sebastian. The terrorist organization Basque Fatherland and Liberty claimed responsibility, saying it was in answer to the violent repression of last week's demonstrations.

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Since this group often operates on the principle of retaliation in kind, additional attacks to avenge the five deaths are possible. On Thursday shots were fired at two armed policemen in Pamplona, and yesterday a wealthy Basque industrialist was kidnapped in Bilbao. Police blame this same Basque group for both incidents.

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[redacted] The policeman's murder apparently provoked a demonstration Thursday night in San Sebastian when thugs calling themselves Warriors of Christ the King--a well-known ultra-right terrorist group--went on a rampage, smashing up bars and restaurants and assaulting customers. The populace was further outraged when the police made no move to stop the vandalism and violence.

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[redacted] Prime Minister Suarez faces a dilemma in dealing with demands for release of all Basque political prisoners since freeing those convicted of actual killings would bring a further protest from rightists and the military. The interior minister announced that the government would proceed with a review of each remaining case under terms of the King's amnesty of last March, which is broad enough to allow the release of all prisoners. Yesterday four more Basques were pardoned and released. The government, however, may be tempted to defer the remaining cases to the parliament to be elected next month.

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